

Country Lyceums.

The country lyceum is sometimes made the subject of ridicule. Its would-be poets and orators are laughed at, and the subjects its members discuss are sometimes absurd and not well-timed. But great things have often come from these laughed at speakers in country literary societies or lyceums. Men who have made their first speeches in these lyceums have sometimes made their last in the halls of congress. Writers who have come timidly and tremblingly forward to read their first essays in little country school-rooms have had the world for their stage and its delighted people for their hearers in after years.

Every school district should have a literary society for the long winter evenings. It is a never failing source of enjoyment and good is sure to come from it.

Almost every neighborhood has readers and thinkers who can discuss clearly and intelligently all topics of general interest.

Every neighborhood has an organ and singers, and if the music is not very good and the singing not good at all, a desire may at least be awakened for something better.

A taste for good reading, good music, good stories, good singing and for good in all things has been created in country lyceums.

Ridiculous things may be said and done, but a very wise man once wrote, "He who hath not a dram of folly in his mixture hath pounds of much worse matter in his composition."

The amusing things of life play a most important part in bringing about general happiness and general good. Every man and every woman is better for a hearty laugh once in a while.

The Pope and Music.

Pope Leo XIII. has issued a series of regulations for sacred music which will have a marked effect when they are extended to Catholic churches of this country, where the organist has exercised considerable latitude in adaptations and selections. For instance, one rule forbids the playing of "polkas, waltzes, quadrilles and galops." Such music is undoubtedly improper in church, but there have been times during the celebration of some special feast when it appeared to me that the organ was pealing forth strains less solemn in character than anthems, and not altogether unlike certain dance music. Another rule prohibits "love and comic songs." There seems to be no necessity for injunction against the latter class of songs, but has it never struck any of my readers that they have heard the choir tenor singing to sacred words a hymn that was reminiscent of Charibel or Millards. Then, too, "Dreamy eyes that haunt me still," and the waltz song from "Nanon," make beautiful hymns. National airs are also forbidden by the pope, and all vocal music composed upon theatrical or profane themes. This closes the organ to selections from the operas, and will affect the organist at St. Xavier's church. Another rule forbids music of such inordinate length that mass is prolonged beyond the prescribed limit of noon. This comes as a relief to the congregation, and if the pope would add a like injunction in regard to sermons, there would be more pleasure in attending high mass. Finally, big drums, cymbals, pianos and instruments used by street musicians are ruled out of church. A grateful people will also give thanks for the corollary, which discounts the improvisation of voluntaries by the organists, for it is a fatal habit on their part to turn their fingers loose on the keys and set the sensitive hearing wild with note races and the wild screaming of the treble.—*St. Louis Spectator.*

Instances of Business Ambition.

It is a matter of great pride with many that when they die their houses will go on under the same name they gave to them. It was a frequent boast of the late James Gordon Bennett that when he died it would not be necessary to change the name of the proprietor at the head of the editorial page of the *Herald*, as his son and successor bore the same name. Years before, while still in the old Nassau and Fulton street building, he had given orders that the door of the office should never be closed nor the publication of the paper suspended for any cause.

The original Harper Brothers had this same desire in the later years of their lives. I have heard Fletcher Harper say with evident gratification that the business of the house was such that it would not be possible to suspend work entirely on the death of either member, and that there were sons enough of the original four to perpetuate the firm title of Harper & Brothers almost indefinitely.

I am told that Robert Bonner is engaged in making a curious provision for continuing the *New York Ledger* after his death in the same style in which he has been conducting it for about thirty years. He holds, so I understand, that it will take his successor fully three years to learn his methods so as to select the class of literary material which has given the *Ledger* its peculiar success. He has, therefore, begun to collect extra material with the design of securing enough to last three years after his death. Already about enough copy for one year, or fifty-two numbers, has been accumulated.—*New York Tribune.*

A Well-Known Judge.

One of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Texas happened to be traveling in England. In London he made the acquaintance of one of the most intelligent lawyers of that city. After the man from Texas had answered several questions the Englishman asked:

"Where do you reside?"
"In Texas."
"And what is your occupation?"
"I am one of the Supreme Court Judges."
"Oh, yes; I've read a great deal about you. Your name is Lynch, is it not?"—*Texas Siftings.*

He that would eat the kernel must crack the nut.

Uncertainty of Literature.

Why is it that young writers harp so persistently on minor chords? Where there is one poem on home and sunshine and happy life, there are a dozen which moan over blasted hopes (at 22), twilight by the moaning sea, withered leaves, and other subjects of a more or less melancholy nature. Very few wholesome, cheery, religious verses are offered, nearly all expressing the writer's praiseworthy resignation under calamities which never happened, and his extreme anxiety to turn back upon the earth, which he designates as a "vale" or a "desert." The same is apt to be true of prose offerings.

All editors will unite in saying that the rarest and most difficult short sketch to procure is a racy, well-written, Thanksgiving or Christmas story, while the themes of hopeless love and early death are dwelt upon with avidity. By far the most numerous class of short stories offered to magazines and weeklies is that of juvenile sketches. It is a popular fallacy that while it takes a genius to write a society novel, anybody can tell stories to children. While this delusion, for such it certainly is, has been productive of a great deal of good juvenile work, by drawing efforts of writers to that field, it also overloads the mail-bags with a vast amount of inanity intended to nourish the youthful imagination and appease its pangs for intellectual entertainment. Try to read one of these stories aloud to half a dozen mischievous boys and girls and see whether it holds them. There's the real taste.

At the bottom of all, the real fact is that the literary market is overcrowded, the surplusage being largely composed of those who, as Holmes says, mistake laziness for inspiration. Half a century ago the case was different. In the first place, literary work was then poorly paid, as may be seen by the \$5 checks Hawthorne and Longfellow received for some of their finest productions, and secondly, the natural consequence was that there was but little really good writing. Again, many of the fields which were then open to writers have been since trampled over until their flowers are all plucked, and their turf plowed up for corn and beans.

Altogether literature is, as has been well said, a most uncertain staff. While, however, there is much in the present condition of things to discourage those who are preparing themselves for this work, it is to be remembered that there is a constant demand, even in the editorial offices of our largest magazines and papers, for bright, wholesome, earnest articles, stories and poems on subjects that tend to cheer and amuse as well as elevate. Of such the market is never full.—*Boston Globe.*

Ugly Girls.

No woman likes to be homely, and she who is born a beauty is fortunate indeed. But let not the plain, or even the ugly girl despair of acquiring a sufficient amount of beauty to render her attractive. When a woman loses a desire to please she loses half her charms. Nothing is more conducive to beauty than cheerfulness and good humor, and no sickly or unhappy woman can be good natured or cheerful. Every woman ought to understand that nothing short of positive deformity can make her utterly unattractive, provided she will study her points; and points of attractiveness every woman has. A thoroughly graceful manner can be acquired by any woman, and is a powerful charm. The best grace is perfect naturalness. Still you must study yourself and form your manners by the rule of that art, which is but the carrying out of the rules of nature. But if it is nature to be forever assuming some unpicturesque, ungraceful art, pray help nature with a little art. If you are stout, avoid the smallest chair in the room; if you are thin, do not carry yourself with your chin protruding and your spinal column curving like the bowl of a spoon. Do not wear flimsy materials made up with a ruffle or flounce to fill up the hard outlines of your bad figure so cruelly defined by the tightly pulled back draperies. Study the art of dress. The plainest woman can dress so tastefully as to make it an absolute pleasure to look at her. If you have been moping until you are sick with the wretched heresy that you are cruelly ill-favored and hopelessly homely, cast the idea to the winds, gird yourself with courage and determination, be up and doing, lay siege to possibilities, go forth valiantly, and conquer.—*California Maverick.*

Third-Class Matter.

"Ef it ain't writtin' an' it ain't printin', wot kinder stamps do you put on?" queried an urchin, whose head barely reached the window ledge, at the postoffice yesterday.

The clerk at the stamp window smiled at the youngster's question and winked in evident enjoyment at the bystanders. Then he said:

"Sonny, I suppose you've got third-class matter?"

"I dunno," was the dubious reply. The clerk laughed and repeated his winks at the interested spectators who had overheard the dialogue.

"Well," he said finally, and mimicking the boy's manner, "ef it ain't writtin' an' it ain't printin', I guess we'll have to call it third-class matter and send it along for you pretty cheap. What does it weigh?"

"Nuthin'," said the boy, and his mouth stretched into a grin that threatened to fracture his ears.

"Nothing?" repeated the clerk.

"Yump," muttered the boy, reeling his smile slightly.

"In that case, then, sonny," said the clerk, with hilarious animation, "we'll send your package through for nothing."

"Sure pop?" questioned the boy, as he edged back a little from the window.

"Sure pop," repeated the clerk. "I pledge the honor of the government. Hand over the matter that weighs nothing."

"Here it is, mister," and the boy pushed an inflated toy balloon through the window opening. "Mind yer, I'll hold the gov'ment 'sponsible—yer said so." And then the boy and the spectators did the laughing and the winking and the clerk devoted himself to chunks of language which weighed more than the mailable four pounds allowed by law.—*Philadelphia Press.*

TAILOR TOPICS.

Will There Be a New Generation of Clothes-Makers?

So much time and attention have been given of late to the all-absorbing topic of fashionable attire for the male sex that it would seem eminently proper eventually for some enterprising publisher to launch forth a magazine especially devoted to their whimsical wants and ideas. The magazine would have to be conducted upon the same plan of those designed for the fairer sex, and this of itself would be a novelty, if nothing more. Columns are devoted to the matter in almost every paper in the country, and at this rate woman, who has unquestionably held the fashionable field, stands a chance of being crowded out to make room for the other darlings.

There is a class, however, who smile complacently at this probable turn in affairs, and who chuckle to themselves in delightful anticipation. They are the tailors—those squatly figures, who perch on a bench after the manner of a Turk, deep in the mystery of shaping coats and pants for aspiring youth.

"I tell you, what, though," said a popular tailor; "there is going to be an alarming scarcity of clothes-makers pretty soon. At the present day, no one wants to be a tailor. Nobody wants to learn the trade. It's almost impossible to get an apprentice, and I venture to say that when the present generation of tailors dies off there'll probably be no one left to undertake the business. Did you ever see a young man making a pair of breeches? I don't think you have. Nearly all are old hands with no successors when they shuffle off. A great many applicants don't want to do anything but cutting, and most of them are botches. There has been quite a falling off, too, in the number of tailors recently. Do others take their places? Not often, and when they do soon quit in disgust. There is only one alternative, as far as I can see, and that is for women to take the matter in hand when no men are left. This event may be long distant. But it is extremely probable, nevertheless."

"Can a woman equal a tailor in making clothes for men?"

"I never heard of any. If they're in existence they must be very scarce. Some women can make shirts and pants for youngsters, but I never knew one to tackle a coat or vest. And I'll bet you that a man or boy couldn't be persuaded to wear them after they were made. However, men should accustom themselves to women-made garments, for I think it will only be a few years when the task will devolve upon them entirely."

"Heretofore," he continued, "it has been regarded as a distinction between tailor-made and manufactured clothes that the pants of the former were pressed out round and smooth, without any crease down the leg. But it seems that the manufacturers have caught on to this, and now their pants are also pressed smooth by tailors employed for that purpose. If, upon reaching their destination, they still retain a crease caused from packing, the dealer to whom they are consigned makes any alteration that may be necessary to suit the purchaser. What must then be done? I see that in New York all the tailors purposely make a crease down the legs of pantaloons in order to again distinguish them from store clothes. The whole thing naturally looks absurd, but there must be a distinction. What other follies did you say? They are too numerous to mention. If he simply gave his order and chose the cloth and style there would be no trouble. But he wants the breeches to fit just so and so around the leg and to delicately fall over the feet. And the coat must not have a wrinkle. The shoulders, however, receive more attention than the whole business. They must be systematically padded, and to do this well requires great skill. This feature of the coat has the greatest charm imaginable to the happy possessor. Many hollow-chested persons, with stooping shoulders, have the shoulders padded to make them square and give the body an upright position. This will account for some of the finely formed men you encounter daily, and if you took their coats off you would find about an inch and a half of padding on each shoulder. It is perfectly reasonable to wish to improve a defective form by artificial methods. But the matter of padding is carried to such an extreme that it becomes disgusting. What about skin tight pants? I think their day is almost over, though it is hard to say what will take their place. Yes, sir," repeated the tailor man, as he resumed his squatting position, "our race is almost run, and unless more men learn the business there'll be a panic for pants one of these days."—*Galveston News.*

Pressed Every Week.

Full many a hat upon a woman's head,
Looms up quite like a tower, as you see.
But many a man has naughty cuss' words said
Behind that tall hat at a matinee.
—*Goodall's Daily Sun.*

Full many a feather on a woman's hat,
Once loomed up on a rooster's keel,
Full many a seal skin covered once a cat,
Good gracious, sakes! How big us women feel.
—*Gorham's Mountaineer.*

Full many a woman has no hat,
Nor yet a feather or gew-gaw,
But she could mop the floors, mind that,
With jokers about mother-in-law.
—*Albert Maple Leaf.*

No Time to Read.

"My dear, you haven't cut out the leaves of the magazine I brought home last week."

"Fred, I haven't time to read. See how I am getting along with my rick-rack."

"Yes, dear. You've worked steadily at it every evening this week, haven't you?"

"There's about five yards of it, isn't there?"

"Yes."

"You can buy it in the store for about two cents a yard, can't you?"

"Yes."

"That would be ten cents, wouldn't it? I regard it as a wonderful freak of economy. The gas, the tax on your eyes, the superiority of rick-rack over a well stored mind, the—"

"Fred, you're just too mean for anything."—*Philadelphia Call.*

MILICENT'S PUPIL.

What a summer that was at Scalp Level, when we all had the art fever, and organized our sketching club!

Despite our lofty aspirations, it was a very jolly affair, and we managed to have a good time generally. But one afternoon stands out with peculiar distinctness in my memory.

We were off to the woods on a kind of aesthetic picnic, or what Jule called a "sketching jamboree." Our party was a large one, but, though there was always more or less of a scattering out of doors, Milicent Leigh was the only one who had a trick of slipping off by herself in quest of beauties which no one else could discover.

On this particular afternoon she was seated alone on a rustic bridge, making a sketch of a prostrate tree that lay just at the water's edge.

"There!" she murmured, laying down her book. "That's the prettiest I've done this season."

The words had scarcely left her lips ere she gave a low cry and started to her feet in alarm.

A cold nose had just been impudently thrust into her face, and the same moment she confronted a big brown dog, whose mate was dashing through the underbrush not fifty yards away.

Milicent stood for a moment in the most abject terror, and her apprehensions hardly lessened when she saw the owner of the dogs emerge from the brush with a gun over his shoulder.

He had a big bushy brown beard, and with his gray slouch hat pulled over his eyes, he might easily have passed for a villain.

As he caught sight of the dogs he put a silver whistle to his lips and called them.

Still he advanced toward Milicent, and she took a backward step with half a mind to run away.

The same instant she glanced around, and was conscious that her hat was gone.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, starting forward again, for she saw it bobbing up and down on the surface of the water.

lady to go there," the gentleman said. "I guess we had better go," Milicent observed, turning to Jule, and making a motion to lay aside the gossamer.

"Keep it on," said the gentleman. "You will need it, and I am going to walk over to the farm house myself."

So they started all three together. Mrs. Pointdexter and the rest of us were already seated on the broad old-fashioned piazza when they came hurrying up out of the rain.

Not being a prey to alarm, we could judge dispassionately of the gentleman's appearance, and all of us thought him decidedly good-looking—in short, quite "sketchable."

"Ask him if he'd mind posing, Mrs. Pointdexter," Mabel Waring said in French, when the stranger had seated himself like the rest of us to wait for the passage of the storm. "Dear knows how long we may have to stay here; and I'm sure he'd make a fine sketch—he and his dogs."

The moment she had spoken she had regretted it, for she saw the stranger understood French. He turned with perfect ease of manner, and said:

"I shall be happy to do so. Shall I stand or sit?"

Mabel was so confused that she could not answer.

"Sit," Jule replied good-naturedly; "if it is not too much of a bore."

"Not at all," he said, glancing toward our chaperon. "I could move mountains in the name of Pointdexter."

"You know the name, then?" queried Jule as he set us the example of getting out our pencils and books.

"It is the name of my best friend, Anthon Pointdexter of Boston."

Jule jumped up and grasped the stranger's hand.

"Do you know him?" he cried eagerly.

"As well as myself."

"Mother!" Jule exclaimed turning to Mrs. Pointdexter. "This gentleman is a friend of Anthon's. Are you from Boston, sir?"

The stranger drew out a card and handed it to Jule, and while he was reading the name, "Neil Halleck," and passing it to his mother, the stranger



"DON'T BE FOOLISH MILICENT."

The owner of the dogs saw it, too. "After it, Czarl!" he cried. "Quick, sir! For shame! Don't you know better than to startle a lady so?"

The moment he spoke Milicent breathed more freely, for the tone of his voice was reassuring.

"I am very sorry the dogs frightened you," he said, lifting his hat politely. "They don't understand the courtesies."

Milicent made some faint reply as she watched the big brown setter swim out into the middle of the stream after her hat.

"I hope it's not hurt," said the stranger, anxiously, as he restored it to her.

"I guess not," Milicent answered. "Thanks!"

"I am afraid it will be more thoroughly drenched than it is before you get home," he said. "It is going to rain."

She glanced up at the little patches of sky visible between the trees, saw that there was a thunderstorm brewing.

"I had not noticed it," she said in dismay.

"Have you far to go?"

"Yes—indeed, I don't know. I have some friends somewhere in the woods."

"That is rather an indefinite location," said the stranger smiling.

"I left them at the waterfall," Milicent explained, beginning to feel that the man was not positively dangerous.

A few drops splashed down on their faces.

"I wouldn't advise you to go back—there we are going to have a heavy storm, and you had better go at once to the nearest farmhouse. Allow me."

He drew forth his gossamer coat from his game-bag and threw it around her shoulders.

"I don't know the way," she stammered, making a futile effort to decline his protection.

"If you will come with me—" he began, and then Jule came dashing through the brush crying:

"Miss Milicent! Miss Milicent! I've been hunting for you everywhere. Come! It's going to rain, and they have all gone off to the farm house."

Then he stopped in astonishment at the sight of the broad-shouldered stranger and his two dogs.

"I have just been advising the young

It was four weeks after we had had this addition to our club, and Mr. Halleck was now a familiar friend.

He was one of the brightest, most congenial spirits I ever met; but alas! it seemed quite impossible for him to draw a straight line.

His trees seemed to be all toppling over, his bridges were bowed, and he had no more perspective in his landscapes than a born Japanese.

"I'm afraid you will never be a Raphael or a Titian, Mr. Halleck," Milicent said one afternoon as she sat looking over some of his recent disportations.

He was lying full length on the grass, apparently indifferent to his future, except as it was connected with the fate of the girl before him.

Obviously if he was not learning to draw, he was learning something else.

Milicent fluttered the leaves of the sketch book, and glanced ruefully at its contents. As she did so a piece of paper fell out on the grass.

Mr. Halleck reached out his hand for it; but Milicent had picked it up and was looking at it in astonishment.

It was a leaf of water-color tablet, and contained an exquisite little sketch of herself.

"Did you do it?" she asked in surprise.

"Yes—no!" he answered hastily. "Let me see it?"

"No, you can't have it!" she cried, holding it high above her head. It doesn't belong to you, I am sure. You never could have done it. It is perfect in its way; but it is entirely too flattering. Who painted it Mr. Halleck?"

"I did," he said, snatching the hand that held it. "I painted it under an inspiration. You know such things happen occasionally. Give it to me, Milicent; I want both the sketch and the original."

"You can't have it," she said saucily, but looking away to hid what shone in her eyes.

"I must," he said, in a low tone. "I cannot live without you. Darling—"

But then Jule's voice was heard near calling:

"Miss Milicent, Miss Milicent! Here—mother said you were to read this right away."

He came up with a letter in his hand, but like a sensible fellow he grasped the situation and left as soon as he had executed his commission.

Mr. Halleck was naturally provoked at the interruption to his wooing.

He looked away with a vexed expression while Milicent glanced over the letter Mrs. Pointdexter had sent her.

It was signed, "Your son, Anthon," and began:

"MY DEAR MOTHER—I have just returned to Boston after a three weeks' absence at Mount Desert. Hence my delay in answering yours from Scalp Level. I am delighted to learn that you have met Halleck. He is one of the best fellows I know, and is considered by the Boston Society of Artists one of the rising stars of this country. He has exhibited in Paris and London, and carried off a medal in the latter place. The *Athenaeum* says he is destined to found a distinct school of art in America. He is only a beginner as yet, but his first attempts have been uniformly brilliant," and so on over several pages of eulogy.

The letter dropped from Milicent's hand.

"You—you deceived us!" she cried in a choking voice. "You allowed me to attempt to teach you. Oh, what a fool I've made of myself!"

She burst into tears of vexation, and covered her face with her hands.

"Don't be angry, darling," he whispered, gathering her in his arms. "I did not mean—"

"Let me go!" she cried passionately; "I cannot endure the sight of you."

His face paled for an instant, and he would have released her, but he changed his mind, and drawing her closely to him, he said gravely:

"Don't be foolish, Milicent. I had no thought of deceiving you at first. It was only when it was suggested that you should teach me that I snatched at an excuse for being always near you. Surely you can forgive such a subterfuge. I love you, Milicent. Tell me that you are not angry with me. I cannot bear your displeasure."

For a few moments Milicent struggled feebly in his arms, but his eloquence quieted her at last.

It was more self-shame than any other feeling that overpowered her.

She had told him that he had not the temperament of an artist; that he never could learn to draw well; that he had no eye for color, etc., etc.

Never once had it entered her head that he was the young Bostonian about whom the art world was in ecstasies.

"Forgive me, darling!" he begged.

"What a silly thing you must think me!" she sobbed.

"I think you're an angel!" he answered warmly. "And as for talent, dearest, you have quite as much as I have. It only needs cultivation."

Perhaps this mollified her, for she dried her eyes—or allowed him to—and smiled as she said:

"To think you were making all those absurdly crooked trees on purpose. It's too ridiculous."

He laughed.

"But you haven't told me," said he. "Will you marry me, Milicent?"

What she said then is not known; but he must finally have won her consent, for in the Boston papers there appeared the following winter a number of squibs to this effect:

"Mr. Neil Halleck, the distinguished young artist of this city, was married last Wednesday to Miss Milicent Leigh of Pittsburg. It is understood that Mr. Halleck's bride has considerable artistic talent, and the young couple will start on Saturday for Italy, where they propose to study art together."

Sweet Revenge.

It is all very well for New York editors to poke fun at country men who blow out the gas when they go to bed, but the countryman has a terrible revenge when the city editor visits him in the summer and wants to find how celery plants are grafted.—*Fall River Advance.*